

Georgia's Pre-K Program 2011-2012 FAQ for Planning Instruction

This FAQ is a companion document to the *IQ Guide for Planning Instruction*, and includes information to support programs in planning appropriate instruction.

Organizational Components

How do I organize lesson plans? Lesson plans are the key to effective teaching and a critical factor in achieving positive student outcomes. Lesson plans communicate a teacher's objective for lessons and guide the creation of a purposeful learning environment. Lesson plans should be complete and on site by the first school day of each week, organized chronologically or by topic, and kept accessible. Weekly lesson plans will cover all seven Content Standard domains with Content Standards reflected on all teacher planned activities. Content Standards should reflect the intent/purpose being targeted by that particular activity. Clock times on lesson plans will correspond with the clock times on the daily schedule.

What documents are used to create a complete lesson plan? Template options are located on the BftS website. Lesson plan template is individual teacher choice, or system choice. Do not delete any BftS template component. **First**, choose a Lesson Plan Template from the five provided. You may rearrange the order of the events on the template. **Second**, choose a Small Group Template from the four provided. Small Group Templates address the needs of students at various times throughout the year; choice of this template will change as your student's abilities and needs change. It is recommended changes are infrequent to provide stability in routine and procedures. **Third**, choose one of the Changes to the Environment Form to reflect rotation of materials based on topic of study/student needs. It is not necessary to print this form weekly as updates and additions can be made to original form printed at the beginning of each new topic of study. **Lastly**, Planning for Assessment Template is optional if a teacher documents plans for assessment on the weekly Lesson Plan Template. Teachers should decide which approach best suits their planning needs.

Instructional Activities

What are considered appropriate activities for Pre-K? Appropriate activities support all domains of learning and emphasize active exploration, interaction with materials, teachers, and other children. Teachers provide ample opportunity for children to choose materials with time to explore and manipulate. Open-ended activities allow children to explore, create solutions, and problem solve. Use strategies which allow students to work in their own interest areas, use their own learning styles, and at their own ability level. Teachers should be aware of children's learning styles (multiple intelligences), skill levels, gender-specific learning styles and plan activities and materials accordingly. Rote/drill activities with memorization, letter of the week, worksheets and ditto's are inappropriate. Knowledge of early childhood development and assessment data is used to plan both individual and whole group instruction.

What is an Opening Activity? An opening activity helps prepare and focus children on the topic of study, current interests, or special events which will occur during the day. An opening activity serves as a way to create excitement and interest in learning opportunities which have been planned for the day. Ideas for opening activities might be introduction of new materials, changes made to learning areas, special visitors, experiments, or the reading of a book on the topic of study. Field trips should also be addressed. Opening activities should take place daily and vary throughout the year.

How do I address needs of an individual child? Space to document plans to individualize for children is located on the Small Group Template. There will be times when small group placement is not appropriate to meet the needs of a child, but support is needed throughout the day (for example, child with special needs, child who needs support in self-control, has difficulty making friends, behind other classmates in basic skills, etc).

What is meant by music with gross motor and how do I reflect these opportunities? Gross motor allows children to use large muscle movement. Activities reflecting children on their feet, moving and responding to music meets this expectation. Title of music choice and gross motor activity (marching, using bean bags, etc.) will be reflected in lesson plans. Music and movement is an opportune time to teach and reinforce skills, therefore Content Standards listed with music and movement will reflect the intent/focus behind which skills are being taught or strengthened.

What is Closing Activity? Closing is the last instructional event of each day. This time is used to refocus children on the events of the day, provide activities to address assessment needs of the group, go over any reminders for upcoming events. Purposefully planned activities with supporting Content Standards will be reflected in lesson plans. Activities will vary based on student needs/current events.

Language and Literacy Development

How do I support Language and Literacy Development? Activities are planned throughout the day. **First**, teachers are required to plan at least two (2) opportunities for the children to participate in reading and discussing children's literature daily. Lesson plans must include the names of the stories and/or pieces of literature along with the Content Standard(s) reflecting the intent/focus of story time (predict the ending, count the number of animals on each page, discuss new science vocabulary, etc). Content Standards for planned books may be related to any of the domains but will always reflect the focus of the book choice. Ideas to incorporate into story time might include:

- Introduce book: read the title, author and illustrator; ask what the book might be about; suggest things to look and listen for during reading.
- Run your finger under the text while reading and discuss how we read in a left to right motion.
- Answer questions related to the book.
- Talk about the story during and after a read-aloud session.
- Explain vocabulary or concepts that might be unfamiliar.
- Ask children to look closely at the pictures to help them understand the story, make predictions.
- Pause and wait so children can say the word that ends a repetitive or predictable phrase.
- Ask thinking questions: "What might happen next?" "Where did he go?" "Why did she do that?"

Second, teachers plan for a large group literacy activity daily. Activities include flannel board stories, shared reading using big books, chart stories, acting out a familiar story using props, and modeled writing. Large group literacy activities encourage conversations, questions, awareness of the concepts of print, vocabulary/concept development, brainstorming, analysis and prediction skills.

Shared reading, an interactive reading experience when the teacher leads the class in reading or chanting a familiar book, text, or poem often enlarged for the whole class to see. Shared reading allows students to observe the reading process and to practice reading strategies or concepts in the safety of a group. The text is reread several times over a few days initially by the teacher, who gradually pulls back as students progressively master the text. In each reading, children are encouraged to focus on or discover new concepts of print.

Modeled writing includes making lists on large paper, writing chart stories, graphs, or words on a word

wall. Other examples include morning message board or daily news activities. Model by writing clearly and legibly. Always talk about writing and why we write in order to help children make the connection between the spoken and written word.

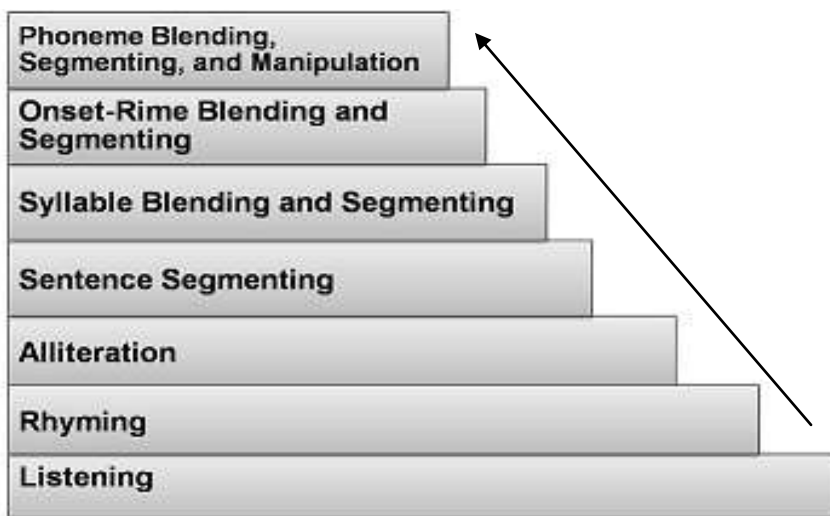
It is appropriate to plan specific shared reading and modeled writing experiences daily; however, it is equally important to capitalize on the many spontaneous opportunities that occur throughout the instructional day.

Third, minimum once a week, a lesson is planned with a small group of children (2-8) involving reading a piece of literature and engaging the children in a supporting activity. The activity and the piece of literature must be documented in the lesson plans with the Content Standard(s) that best reflect the intent/focus of the book and activity. The Content Standard for the planned small group reading and activity may be related to any of the Content Standard Domains. Small group reading can occur during the small group time or at another time designated by teachers.

Fourth, phonological awareness activities should be planned for both large and small group instructional times, but at least one activity daily in which all children are involved will be planned. Large group planning is appropriate for exposure and support of phonological awareness, while small group settings provide an optimal instructional time to address the varying levels of development and more effectively support individual needs.

The activities should be varied based on the needs and levels of the children in the classroom. It should be evident in lesson plans that activities are following a continuum of learning with a progression throughout the year, beginning with listening and rhyming and moving to syllable segmenting and phoneme manipulation later in the year or as children are ready for a particular skill level.

The levels of phonological awareness are: (1) Listening, (2) Rhyming, (3) Alliteration, (4) Sentence Segmenting, (5) Syllable Blending and Segmenting, (6) Onset Rime Blending and Segmenting, and (7) Phoneme Blending, Segmenting and Manipulation.



Refer to 2009 Back to School Newsletter at www.decal.ga.gov

Small Group Instruction

How do I organize Small Groups? Small group instruction provides opportunity to focus attention on individual children and individual needs. Small groups provide an opportunity to individually assess on a more personal level, while making the room more communal and comfortable. Small group

instruction involves no less than two and no more than eight **(2-8)** children who meet with an adult to experiment with materials and solve problems. Some may work independently on an assigned task. Small group activities use basic materials found in the classroom and should not include patterned art projects. By using these materials teachers take advantage of supporting children in understanding how to use materials appropriately while setting up the environment for better collection of assessment data. Small groups should be formed and will change based on the developmental needs and skills of children reflected in your assessment data. The Georgia's Pre-K Content Standards should be used in planning small group instruction and documented in lesson plans. Activities during small group time will maintain the practice of planning developmentally appropriate experiences. The activities planned for groups of students working independently should also be purposeful with Content Standards documented. Lesson plans will identify by use of names, initials, symbols or number the group assignment of each child participating in small group activities.

Is this a good place to plan my weekly small group reading? At least one teacher-directed small group reading experience (list title of book) with an accompanying activity to support or strengthen the needs of children will be reflected weekly. Most teachers find this is the most logical time of day to include small group reading.

Planned Assessment Collection

What is the process for assessing Pre-K Children? In order to help students become successful learners, teachers must know the strengths and needs of their children. Assessment is the first step in planning activities and instruction, as factual information should be used to determine the needs of children. Assessment is conducted in the context of the daily classroom learning environment and not obtained through on-demand, rote/drill processes. Teachers gather information by observation, work samples, matrices, and photos. Observing child interactions with each other, with materials, and with the teacher is the optimal process for gathering knowledge of a child's abilities and needs. This information is gathered on a regular, ongoing basis.

How do I plan for assessment? Because the Pre-K day is a fun-filled and fast-paced environment, thoughtful planning for collection of assessment will make each day more productive and the quality of assessment documentation will increase. Many observations happen spontaneously, so have the camera ready and note taking materials easily accessible every day. Teachers could target specific children daily whom they will interact with during center time, thus gathering data through conversation and use of materials; plan a small group activity which allows for assessment data gathering; introduce and then "plant" materials which encourage children to exhibit skills/knowledge; and always have a matrix which allows you to capture those predictable moments which happen through the routine processes of each day.

Who is responsible for gathering assessment data? Both teachers share the responsibilities of observing, taking observational notes and photos, completing matrices and collecting work samples. Teachers should note in lesson plans opportunities which have been pre-planned for assessment data gathering throughout the day. Large group, center time, lunch, and even outdoors offer a great wealth of information if you are focused on observing and interacting with children. Documentation of assessment plans can be reflected directly on the lesson plan template with the actual activity which is to take place, or teachers may use the Planning for Assessment Template which will be attached to weekly lesson plans.